

BOOK REVIEWS

THE CHILD IN HEALTH AND DISEASE—A Textbook for Students and Practitioners of Medicine. By Clifford G. Grulee, M.D., Rush Professor of Pediatrics, University of Illinois, Chief Editor, *American Journal of Diseases of Children*; and R. Cannon Eley, M.D., Associate in Pediatrics and Communicable Diseases, Harvard University Medical School. The Williams and Wilkins Company, Baltimore, Md., 1948. \$12.00.

When a new text in a field as broad as that of pediatrics appears, the potential purchaser asks what it has to offer that is not to be found in other current texts and the reviewer asks himself what is the purpose for which this potential purchaser purchases his reference books. In general, this purpose is to supply him with information not hitherto available to him from his own experience or from his personal library and journals. Such desired information is often in the domain of unusual diseases, of recent additions to medical knowledge relevant to his practice, especially diagnostic procedures and therapy. A prime requisite for any reference volume is a thoroughly adequate index.

There are now two American one-volume pediatric texts of outstanding merit: the Holt-McIntosh "Holt's Diseases of Infancy and Childhood," eleventh revised edition; and the Mitchell-Nelson "Textbook of Pediatrics," fourth edition revised. The former, published in 1940, and now understood to be in the process of revision, is in some respects out of date but in the opinion of the reviewer remains, more than any other, the ideal text regarding the requirements above noted, with the Mitchell-Nelson, dated 1945, a fairly close second. Both have adequate indexes. The present volume edited by Grulee and Eley is of about the same size and invites comparison with the other two. It is actually composed of units written by 75 different authors (only five from the Pacific coast), as compared with 35 in the Holt-McIntosh and 49 in the Mitchell-Nelson. With so various a composition, the merit of individual chapters is bound to vary greatly, but on the whole the quality of the contributors and of their contributions does not compare too favorably with that of the other two texts. Among those which are of special value are: Physical Growth and Development, by J. A. Johnston; Pediatric Pathology, by Sidney Farber; Vitamins and Avitaminosis by Drake and Tisdall; The Normal Newborn, by Clifford and Berenberg; Meningococcic Meningitis, by Hoyne; Poliomyelitis, by Wilson; Immunization Procedures, by Shaw; Streptococcal Infections, by Boisvert, Powers and Dunphy; Allergy and Eczema by Bratner and by Hill; Poisoning, by Aikman, Eley and others; First Aid, by Harrison; Pediatric Techniques, by Grulee, Jr., and Birdsong; and Juvenile Diabetes, by Priscilla White. The sections on Adolescence by Beverly and others, and on Pediatric Surgery by Coe will also be found useful.

It is when one attempts to look up specific subjects that the defects of the present volume and the inadequacy of the index becomes noticeable. For instance, retrolental fibroplasia—a form of blindness occurring in premature infants, which has attracted much attention during the last five years—is not to be found in the index, and is only briefly and inadequately mentioned in the section on the eye. Epidemic diarrhea of the newborn, a disease of major importance in pediatrics, is the subject of two brief descriptions. Despite the demonstration by at least two groups of workers of a virus in the stools in this disease, virus etiology is not mentioned and the cause is stated "most often" to be the hemolytic streptococcus, a view which is contrary to that now generally accepted. The life-saving measures described by Darrow and his associates are not mentioned; indeed,

the whole subject of fluid and electrolytic replacement is poorly covered. The physician wishing to learn and apply proper therapy would find no help here; this is particularly strange in the case of a work specifically intended, according to the preface, for the practicing pediatrician. According to the index, the only mention of electrocardiography is in relation to diphtheria. The section on coccidioidomycosis, written by an Illinois physician, ends with a statement (based on irrelevant guinea-pig experiments) that the sputum is infectious and that isolation of patients should be like that of patients with tuberculosis. This view is not correct according to Smith and his associates, who have had the largest personal experience with the disease.

In view of the widespread interest in congenital anomalies of the heart and great vessels, it is strange to find that the section on this subject, written by Gibson of Chicago, does not mention the operative procedure devised by himself and Potts, which has now been used in many cases and particularly at ages earlier than the period when the Blalock-Taussig procedure can be done to best advantage; nor is there mention of Gross's valuable procedure for the relief of tracheoesophageal constriction by double aorta and related anomalies. Moreover, Gibson's statement that in congenital cardiac anomalies, an "exact anatomical diagnosis is rarely possible" does not correctly represent the status of modern knowledge in the light of angiocardiology (which is not mentioned), right heart catheterization, and other aids, all of which render a fairly exact diagnosis decidedly possible in a great many instances, and are of the greatest value in assessing the indications for operation.

The section on stomatitis does not mention herpes virus, which has been found by at least three independent groups of workers to be the cause of the acute gingivostomatitis usually ascribed erroneously to the Plaut-Vincent organism. In the case of another characteristically pediatric disease, acrodynia, no mention is made of recent observations that it may be due to mercury poisoning (usually calomel) and that it has been successfully treated with BAL. In the section on cerebral palsies the important factor of prenatal injury, especially from placental separation and toxemia, is not mentioned. The treatment of subdural hematoma, so ably described by Ingraham several years ago, is not only cursorily but actually dangerously dealt with, since it is stated that "immediate evacuation" is the correct treatment, whereas Ingraham emphasizes the importance of preliminary day-by-day gradual withdrawal of blood to avoid the hazards of sudden decompression. The section on endocrines leaves much to be desired; thus, in the discussion of precocious puberty, it is stated that the usual cause is tumor of the adrenal gland, whereas this is true only of the male; the granulosa cell tumor of the ovary—which should always be looked for in females since it is malignant and requires early removal—is not mentioned. The discussion of premature closure of the cranial sutures is quite inadequate and the operation which gives protection against and relief from the important complications of blindness and intracranial hypertension is not mentioned.

It is, of course, impossible for a reviewer to read through completely such a volume as this, but from the samplings mentioned it seems to be a fair judgment that this new pediatric text leaves much to be desired, and that the practicing pediatrician depending on it alone will not find in it much of the information needed in the care of his patients. On the other hand, there can be no question that if he already has other texts at hand, he may find a number of subjects better covered here than elsewhere.